

NICELLE BEAUCHENE GALLERY

Maija Peeples-Bright

SEALabrate with Maija!

May 31-June 30, 2019

Opening Reception: Friday, May 31, 6-8 pm

Nicelle Beauchene is pleased to present a solo exhibition of paintings by Maija Peeples-Bright, spanning three decades of her career from 1971-1996. Titled *SEALabrate with Maija!*, this exhibition is the artist's first in New York.

For nearly thirty years, Peeples-Bright exhibited at Adeliza McHugh's Candy Store Gallery in Folsom, California. McHugh was in her fifties and had no formal experience in the art world when she decided to open an art gallery after the local health department shut down her almond nougat business. The Candy Store Gallery became synonymous with the Funk Art movement and Peeples-Bright showed there along side Robert Arneson, Clayton Bailey, Roy De Forest, David Gilhooly, Irv Marcus, and William T. Wiley. Peeples-Bright was introduced to McHugh through her teacher at UC Davis Robert Arneson and had her first exhibition there in 1965.

In the late 1960's, frustrated with the limitations of Funk, Peeples-Bright was a founding member of the Northern Californian movement dubbed Nut Art. Along with Clayton Bailey, Roy De Forest, David Gilhooly, and David Zack, Nut artists sought to create fantasy worlds that were reflective of each artist's idiosyncrasies and self-created mythologies. Peeples-Bright and others adopted alter egos for this purpose, she was known as "Maija Woof." In 1972 at California State University Hayward, Clayton Bailey organized the first Nut Art exhibition. A manifesto written for the occasion by Roy De Forest declared: "THE WORK OF A PECULIAR AND ECCENTRIC NUT CAN TRULY BE CALLED 'NUT ART' ... THE NUT ARTIFICER TRAVELS IN A PHANTASMAGORIC MICRO-WORLD, SMALL AND EXTREMELY COMPACT, AS IS THE LIGHT OF A DWARF STAR IMPLoding INWARD."

SEALabrate with Maija! is a glimpse into the colorful world of the artist's creation. Peeples-Bright integrates animals with the absurd into what she refers to as her "beasties." Animals take up nearly every inch of her canvases, acting as protagonists and also modes of pattern and decoration—sheep become clouds, sharks form into window shutters, and leopards morph into mountains. This irreverent treatment of her subjects extends to her pun filled paintings titles, which include *Laughing Owl the Way to the Bank* and *Goating to the Top*. In her work, Peeples-Bright creates exuberant zootopias where her beasties take center stage.

Maija Peeples-Bright (b.1942 Riga, Latvia, lives and works in Rocklin, CA) has shown widely in California over her fifty-year career. Recent exhibitions include *Go Away Road*, organized by Adrienne Rubenstein, Loyal, Stockholm, Sweden (2019); *Dinner for Two*, Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2018); *The Candy Store*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018); *Nut Art*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2017); and Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, Novato, CA (2014). Her work can be found in many public collections such as the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; La Jolla Museum, La Jolla, CA; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV, among others.

For further information, please contact gallery@nicellebeauchene.com.

Gallery hours are Wednesday – Sunday, 11am-6pm.